

# On the Offerings, and the Consecration of the Priesthood Leviticus 1 - 8

by John Nelson Darby

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*The sermon explains how the burnt-offering and meat-offering in Leviticus 1-8 relate to Christ's sacrifice and atonement for sin, providing a means for believers to approach God with confidence.*

**Scripture:** Leviticus 1:3

**Topics:** "Sacrifice", "Access to God"

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## Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the significance of the offerings in Leviticus, illustrating how they provide access to God and represent the work of Jesus Christ. He explains the distinct characteristics of the burnt-offering, meat-offering, and peace-offering, highlighting their roles in atonement and communion with God. Darby points out that these offerings not only reflect Christ's perfect obedience and sacrifice but also serve as a means for believers to approach God in grace. He underscores the importance of recognizing Jesus as the ultimate sacrifice, who bore our sins and enables our communion with God. The sermon concludes with a call to live in the light of this truth, embracing our identity as priests consecrated to God through Christ's sacrifice.

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## Transcript

The sacrifices are connected with, and open out to us especially, the ground of our access and the means of our approach to God.

The beginning of this book goes through the different sorts of offerings by virtue of which we have access to God, and then takes up the priesthood, which sustains the soul in approaching.

Chapter 1 speaks of the burnt-offering, the second of the meat-offering, and the third of the peace-offering. Each of these has a distinct character. Chapter 4 treats of positive transgression in things against conscience, and the sin-offering to be offered thereupon. Chapter 5, as far as verse 13, speaks specially of sins or defilements of different characters, rather than transgressions in things which ought not to be done; and from verse 14 of chapter 5 to verse 7 of chapter 6, we read of the trespass-offering, that is, the offering for anything respecting conduct in which wrong was done to God or man. The special value of these offerings is their representation of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and our approach to God through Him. Many of the principles spoken of as regards Jesus Himself are in measure shewn in the believer; again, that which He wrought Himself works effectually in us. One act of Christ fulfilled or

consummated them all. He made the atonement, was a perfect sweet savour to God when tried to the utmost; and we have communion with Him, feeding on that which has been given for us. He bore our sins and effaced our guilt.

## CHAPTER 1.

In this chapter, verses 1-4, we have directions concerning the burnt-offering. Observe, Jehovah is not speaking from Mount Sinai: there a statement was given of what the law required. Before, however, the Israelites received the instructions from God in the holy Mount, they had broken that covenant; so that when Moses came down, he found them worshipping the golden calf. They had departed from God, and were made naked to their shame before their enemies. Afterwards the tabernacle was set up, where Jehovah would meet the people; and here we get the patterns of things in the heavens, "which patterns were purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices," even with the sacrifice of Jesus. Now the patterns given to us in the tabernacle are for the unfolding of the manner of our coming to God by grace through Jesus Christ. We find the most holy place, where Jehovah met Moses; the holy place, for the priests' daily service; and the court without, where the worshipper first approached, where were the altar of burnt-offering and the laver.

217 The first place of approach to God is the altar of burnt-offering. It may be remarked here that, in the description of the offerings, they are in the order in which they regard God in their proper nature and value, our communion with God being introduced in the third. Then provision for positive transgression is made. In the application or use of them by sinners this last comes first, as it does really with the soul.

When Jehovah spoke to Moses from Sinai, it was to declare His righteous requirements from man on earth. God testified on earth what His righteousness required from man on earth. As to their approach to God in their own righteousness thus prescribed, we see at Sinai itself how all failed. The authority of God was thrown off by making the calf; and thus the voluntary undertaking to do all that Jehovah required (Ex. 19:8; 24:3) was broken, and they had failed altogether. How then could man approach to God? The law given had just brought out the evil that was in him. Was God, then, to deal with them, acknowledging them in their wickedness? Was He to give up His character? If not, He must speak from heaven in grace. There was now no possibility of dealing with man upon earth. "They had refused Him who spake on earth." The question then (as this had failed) was, How could man be brought into communion with God in heaven? "If they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven." But full entrance into heaven was not then revealed, the veil was unrent; but the shadow of good things to come was given.

There must be a sacrifice, but where was such to be found as could cleanse man from sin, of which we have here the shadows? There was no such thing to be found in man as one willing and competent. This was not work for a sinner. But the Son of God said, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God; yea, thy law is within my heart," Ps. 40; Heb. 10:5. "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me." This was the body in which He was to be the obedient One; "Mine ear hast thou opened"; and we see Christ willingly assuming it to do the will of God. We have in Him one fit to be the sacrifice, one who took on Himself the form of a servant, and became obedient to the commands of Jehovah. It was His will to do it, and He was capable of doing it. "Thy law is within my heart." But what was the object in doing this? Not only to keep the law which had been broken, but personally to be a sacrifice. To introduce sinners into God's presence, He must not only keep the law Himself, but become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. He might preach righteousness in the congregation, but men hated it; He might work all

works of blessing, but they envied Him, they derided Him. All the expressions of righteousness in Him were of no avail alone. He must also become a sacrifice, He must shed His blood. Now the burnt-offering represents Him as perfect in Himself, and offering Himself up to God.

218 In verse 3 it is said, "He shall offer it of his own voluntary will\* at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before Jehovah." Now, as regards Christ, the act of offering Himself as a sacrifice is simply His own - "through the eternal Spirit he offered himself without spot to God." We did not offer Him: He was the offerer and the victim; but when we have the Spirit of Christ, we enter into the value of the act as though we laid our hands upon Him. Jesus offered Himself while on earth without spot unto God, presenting Himself as the burnt-offering. In order that we might approach through Him, He must first be exhibited as giving Himself thus willingly. Thus in the account of the sacrifice we see the victim first brought to the door of the tabernacle and then killed. If we had merely seen the fact of Christ's death, we might have thought there was need of it as regarded Himself; but He is first shewn to us as the willing offering, bringing Himself to the door of the tabernacle, and voluntarily offering Himself to God for us.

{\*Christ did so; but the force of the Hebrew words really is "for his acceptance." See John 17:5-8, and 10:18.}

219 This was the sacrifice of atonement, not by anything imposed on Him, though according to the will of God, but of His own free will, as the spotless One, with no yoke of sin on His neck. As the righteous One, He walked up, so to speak, to the door of the tabernacle, and there the prince of this world met Him, and his first effort was to hinder His exhibiting this perfect pattern of obedience on earth.

That which was singular in Jesus, and was in Him alone, was His righteousness. There was power, but this others have had also, though received indeed from Him; but simple abstract perfect truth and righteousness, this Christ alone could exhibit; and if Satan could have made the Lord swerve in one tittle from this, there would have been no such thing exhibited on earth. Satan tried in the temptation to make our Lord exhibit power; but He was still the obedient One, and until the word came upon His ear, He would do nothing, for He came then to be the servant, the perfect pattern of obedience in all things. Satan first tempted Him to exercise His power in making the stones bread, then to question the providential care of God, and thirdly, openly to take the world, which was His rightful dominion.

Having failed in his object altogether, Satan departed from Him for a season, but met Him again to hinder His obedience unto death. The prince of this world came to Jesus as the head of religion and power of the world in the Jews and Gentiles. He cannot, however, hinder Him; but the word is still, "That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do." This is what we who believe know of Jesus, that the prince of this world had nothing in Him. He voluntarily submitted to be the sacrifice; and the act was perfect in giving Himself. Still, if for us, it must be in the place of sin, and atonement for it; and what is so wonderful in the sacrifice of Christ is that absolute perfect obedience and self-devotedness to God and His glory, was in the place of sin, when He was made sin for us. There was nothing available to us until He was put to death (v. 5).

It is said that the priests, the sons of Aaron (not the high priest), shall bring the blood and sprinkle it round about the Christ presents Himself on the day of atonement. The priests have the blood in their hands, pointing out the way of participating in what had been done.

220 Let the fire of the Lord consume Jesus (so to speak) all is, and more especially therein, a sweet savour unto God. In us the fire finds things in themselves offensive, but all that was in Jesus is burnt

altogether, a sacrifice made by fire for a sweet savour unto God. Noah's sacrifice typified this (Gen. 8:20, 21), taking of every clean beast and clean fowl, and offering burnt-offerings to Jehovah; and Jehovah smelled a sweet savour, and the heart of God was governed by the offering, instead of by the sin which is covered, so that God said He would not again curse the ground any more. He would look at the sinner in compassion, because to the sweet savour of the offering of Jesus, for it was such as the all-searching eye of God, when He took it all up in the fire, found to be perfect. This was Christ's own work: we could take no part in it; but we find it to be that which puts away sin, glorifying God when He is made it.

"Be ye imitators of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." Who does not know among the saints the power of this love? While the work was done in a man, and as a man, it was done in divine love by Christ, even as He was given of the love of God to do it. This is a wonderful thing, that One should come having a body prepared, acting in perfect obedience, a perfect example of righteousness, giving Himself a willing offering in the fulness of divine love! Thus, for our full acceptance with God, Christ is the burnt-offering. There the sinner meets God in judgment, but there he meets also Christ offering Himself and then made sin, but made sin in the very act in which His, obedience was absolute and perfect, and so an absolute sweet savour in the very place of sin. God was perfectly glorified in Christ's obedience in that place, and, through death and atonement for sin, a perfect sweet savour to God. Bearing our sins comes in afterwards.

Here therefore we find the ground of our free approach to God in the sweet savour of His burnt sacrifice. The court of the congregation represents the place into which Christ was lifted up from the earth; and here it is that the act of Jesus meets the sinner as the means of approach. It is neither in the holy or most holy place, but in view of the earth, though lifted up from it, that a perfect sacrifice has been offered to God, in which Satan could find nothing, but God everything - in which we could have no part or fellowship, save as a consequence in grace. It was a work between Christ and God and while the saint alone reads its value, it was done before our eyes here, though He was lifted up from the earth (Jesus Christ being evidently set forth crucified, giving a testimony to the world, which leaves the world without excuse): our part in it was the sin that put Him to death. And if there be no other way to God but by Jesus Christ thus set forth in death, what is unbelief doing in despising and rejecting Him who now in heaven is the giver of every blessing to them that believe?

221 You may be busy and careful about many things, but there is but one thing that God looks at: Christ, and Christ a sacrifice for sin. Has this love of God in His Son been but an idle tale to your hearts, while you have been eager in the pursuit after the vanity that presents itself here? Is your heart cold to the love of God, as though the place where the cross stood was a blank in the world? The natural heart hates the claim of His love and His holiness; but the cross is the purchase-work of God to redeem the heart from the love of the world. Atonement, and perfect glorifying of God, and infinite acceptance in the sweet savour of Christ's offering of Himself, are found in the burnt-offering.

## CHAPTER 2.

The meat-offering was of fine flour mingled with oil, anointed with oil, and frankincense thereon, to be brought to Aaron's sons the priests, who had their portion of it. But the priest was to burn the memorial of it on the altar, to be an offering made by fire for a sweet savour unto the Lord. It is a thing most holy of the offerings of the Lord made by fire (see v. 1-3). Here then is another offering made by fire. As in the burnt-offering, it stands the full proving of God, and all that comes out of it is a sweet savour unto Him.

Now the fruits of righteousness are acceptable unto God, but we are not represented here; where we are spoken of, leaven was put in the offering. If we enter into judgment with God, no man living can stand. Our services are indeed accepted as the fruit of His Spirit in us through Christ.

222 We have in this, not an offering of the nature of Abel's (not atonement, that is) but of Cain's. Though surely very different in character from that, yet it is man in the life of nature offered to God, every natural faculty of man in Christ, and that fully tried by the fire of God. The church never could be thus offered as in itself a sweet savour, because in human nature it is not holy.

We shall see by-and-by that when the church is represented, leaven is commanded to be put into the offering. In this there is none; it is perfect human nature without sin, mingled with oil, that is, born in its origin of the Spirit. Oil was poured upon it; that is, Christ as man was anointed with the Holy Ghost and frankincense put thereon. The fragrance of grace ascends up to God. The remnant was for Aaron's sons. First, Jesus, as a man, is offered to God in His perfectness, and then we feed upon Him. The fragrance of His perfectness ascends while we feed. But this is only for priests, the true saints of God.

The ostensible anointing of Jesus was when the Holy Ghost descended upon Him in the shape of a dove; but we find in the first ten verses of this chapter various other characteristics of the meat-offering to shew the complete perfectness of Christ. "Thou shalt part it in pieces, and pour oil thereon." In Jesus every part of His walk and acts, however minute, was of the Holy Ghost, and in its power.

There was perfect human nature without sin, born of the Holy Ghost, and anointed with the Holy Ghost; and every detail of Christ's path was in the power of the Spirit. It was offered to God; and as to all the frankincense, the sweet savour of grace in Christ, and all His motives were for God alone; but saints as priests feed on all He was. The sweet savour of the frankincense might be enjoyed by the priests, but it was offered to God.

The wafers and the cakes were to be unleavened. In this, as in the sheaf of first-fruits waved before Jehovah (Lev. 23 : 10, 11), we have the definite character of Christ without sin, for in the ears of corn there could be no leaven. But when the church is offered, leaven is to be used (Lev. 23:17). But the oblation of the first-fruits (see v. 12 of this chapter) burnt shewn the difference in character from the previous offerings, which were all burned, and were to have neither honey nor leaven in them.

223 No effect of the oil could counteract the leaven; it was commanded to be absolutely without leaven. No power of the Holy Ghost in us counteracts the presence of evil so as to set it aside and remove it, so as to make the subject fit to be an offering made by fire of a sweet savour. If there was leaven in its nature, it could not be an offering to Jehovah. Honey is also excluded from what is offered by fire to Jehovah. The feelings of nature may be sweet and rightly enjoyable, as honey on the top of Jonathan's rod, but it cannot be offered in sacrifice to God.

There are many things sweet and pleasant in themselves that can never be presented to God as an offering in a world of sin. Nothing can be offered to Him that is the mere satisfaction of nature; simple natural affection, though right in itself (nay, it is a sin to be without it), is no offering to God. Our Lord's love to His mother was perfect: we see this in His remembrance of her on the cross; but when first He begins, and all through His ministry, He says, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? "

In Leviticus 23:17 we have that which was typical of the day of Pentecost, on which day the Holy Ghost formed the church. When Christ ascended and presented perfect righteousness to the Father, as man in

heaven, then He by the Spirit could work to bring out the result in the church as the firstfruits. Accordingly we find in this chapter 23 that which, as constituted and consecrated by the Holy Ghost, could be offered to God, but not burnt, because the old nature is still there. In Jesus however there is nothing of this; and in the meat-offering, therefore, there is to be no leaven, but oil mingled with fine flour, and oil poured on it; as none also was in the sheaf waved before Jehovah. So it was that Jesus arose, and was waved before Jehovah; and then, fifty days afterwards, parallel with Pentecost, the two wave-loaves, baken with leaven, were brought as the first-fruits to God. Remark, that there is a burnt-offering and a meat-offering offered with the wave-sheaf, but no sin-offering; but in verse 19 you will find a sin-offering accompanying the wave-loaves to meet the leaven in them; for the sin-offering is that which countervails the evil of the church, or it could not be accepted.

We have thus most satisfactory evidence that Jesus was offered without spot to God; and the knowledge of the blessed truth, that there was the absolute absence of sin in Him, both in nature and practice. On this account alone He could be an offering made by fire. There could be no offering presented to God for a sweet savour in which the holiness of God, searching by fire, could discover, by any possibility, anything that was not positively good - it would have hindered its being such an offering to God, All the fulness of the Holy Ghost could not effect this, for we see this on the day of Pentecost there was the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, but nevertheless sin was there.

224 The Holy Ghost, to give us peace, must come with a message of peace, even that there has been that presented in the offering of Christ by which God's grace can act towards us in righteousness. It is not that the act of Jesus turned God's mind towards us, but by virtue of it God can act according to His own mind, righteously and consistently. If God had done an act of grace without the act of Jesus, it would have been grace without righteousness.

It is, then, first proved that there is no righteousness in man, who has both sinned, and broken the law, and rejected Jesus; but in presenting Jesus to God, in the world, the intrinsically righteous One, and fully tried and tested, and at the same time a sacrifice for man's acceptance by the cross, we find Him through whom God can act in grace towards man. In Him we find the ground of our acceptance, and the sure foundation of God's dealings with us. There is amazing blessing in looking at Jesus as the occasion of grace! The soul of the poor sinner can rest in the knowledge that grace reigns through righteousness; and I find myself a continual debtor to grace, because when I am daily offered to God, the value of the sin-offering is always available, without which I could not be presented; and God is thereby glorified and not man, inasmuch as it is only through Jesus that I approach.

In leaven we see the character of sin, not only in the act but in the abstract. It is well to distinguish between sins as the fruit of our evil nature, and sin. The Holy Ghost detects not only sins in the act, but sin in the nature. Thus we are led to the knowledge that we are all alike, all in one condition. The Holy Ghost lays bare that in nature which the law could only notice in its earliest actings. The moment I have a new nature, not only do I detect the acts of the old nature, but "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, good doth not dwell but I have this comfort, that hating and judging the evil, I know that it is put away. Not that this should make us careless; no, our privilege is to judge it before it has brought forth the bitter fruits. Have you judged it thus in the nature? If it is there, it is condemned. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." As Jesus was presented in all circumstances like me, except sin, whatever I find in myself, not in Jesus, I know is this condemned thing, sin: but as Jesus was also a sacrifice for sin, it is condemned in grace to me, Jesus having suffered for it, though He had it not. If you cannot say you are

without sin in your nature, living in all the spotlessness and purity of Jesus, you are in yourself lost; but recognizing Jesus as the offering for you (though in yourself a poor failing wretched creature), you can be presented to God even as He is, because you are presented in Him who has glorified God in this very place as made sin for us. But, beside this, as a living man on earth all was perfect, and all was tested by the fullest trial of God, passed through the fire, and all was a sweet savour.

225 If you have thus seen Jesus, if you have found Him such, feed upon Him as upon the one object on which your soul can rest as perfect, the pattern in which you can delight to all eternity. This is the way of learning, in a sinful world, what is perfect in God's sight. Take Jesus, and as a thing most holy, offer it to God, delight in it. Study Jesus in the Gospels, in all that He was and did, as presented to us by the Spirit, and then you will learn to have your soul fashioned in its desires according to the riches of His unsearchable grace who offered Himself without spot to God, knowing also that you shall see Him and be made like Him, seeing Him as He is.

Remark carefully the character of Jesus' perfection - no leaven, no honey, the salt of holy separation to God; all the frankincense going up to God. This is His practical example. The presence of the Holy Ghost as to origin and power is an additional element; in the new man, this has its part of truth in us.

The first-fruits were to be offered but not burnt, because leaven was in them; and they could not be in themselves a sweet savour: hence a sin-offering was offered with them (Lev. 23:17-19). They represent the church. being (as may be seen in Lev. 23) the offering of the day of Pentecost; not the church in the unity of the body, but as formed among Jews on earth on that day. The first of the first-fruits, the corn out of full ears, is Christ risen, offered on the morrow of the sabbath after the Passover; it represents Christ Himself, and hence (Lev. 23) there was no sin-offering. If we look at it in Leviticus 2 it is still Christ. Oil and frankincense are put on it. It is an offering made by fire without leaven. It is Christ looked at as man, tried by divine trial of judgment, but perfect to be offered to God. The expressions are somewhat remarkable - geresh carmel, "corn mature out of full ears"; it may be, produce of the fruitful field, the latter being the known sense of carmel; the meaning of geresh was certain. But the general meaning of the offering was pretty plain: Christ in His manhood, sinless and fully proved, presented to God with oil and frankincense of acceptable odour, the firstfruits - fruits of man to God.

## 226 CHAPTER 3.

In the first chapter is the description of the burnt-offering representing the Lord's self-dedication and obedience, even unto death, first coming to do the Father's will, and then offering Himself up without spot unto God; and then, having so offered Himself, a victim of propitiation.

In the second we have the meat-offering, which shews the perfection of His nature, in its origin and every result, even tried by the fire of God in death, and the detailed character of that perfectness, the memorial of it being offered before Jehovah, and the rest eaten by the priests, and unleavened meat-offering. Chapter 3 touches on that part of the peace-offering which was offered to God. There is no mention of what was done with the body of the animal; we must refer to chapter 7 for this. The fat and the blood, which represent the life and energy of the offered victim, are said to be the food of the offering made by fire. They may not be eaten, but are presented to Jehovah, and all burnt, by a perpetual statute. The life belongs to God, and in Christ all was offered up to Him, and for His glory.

We have, in the peace-offering, the same character as the two former; still a sacrifice made by fire of a sweet-smelling savour. The peculiar feature in this offering is, that it is that upon which God Himself feeds;

it is not merely an offering, but food of the offering. This gives it a peculiar character, and introduced communion. The satisfaction and delight, the food of God, is in the offering of Christ. All He finds its rest there, is perfectly glorified there; we find our food, our delight, in it too.

227 In chapter 7 we find the remainder of the peace-offering was eaten by the worshipper, excepting the wave-breast and heave-shoulder, which were the priests'. These three things. then, we may observe. The blood is sprinkled, and the fat burned for a sweet savour; the wave-breast was for Aaron and his sons, the heave-shoulder for the offering priest; and the rest for the worshipper to feed on, as an occasion of joy and thanksgiving before Jehovah. This practice of the offerer's partaking of his sacrifice was followed in the heathen sacrifices to which the apostle alludes (1 Cor. 10:18-21); part was offered to the idol, and with the rest they made a feast, being together partakers of it. Again, when the apostle is giving liberty to the Corinthians to eat what was sold in the shambles, he limits them to that which they ate in ignorance. "If any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice to idols, eat not." They sprinkled the blood on the altar, and then ate the sacrifice; and therefore those who knowingly partook of it were held to be partakers of the altar, this being the way of shewing communion, whether it were with an idol, or between a believer and God. And this has in it a blessed meaning. Christ is not only here represented as the perfect burnt-offering wholly given up to God in death for His glory, but also as an offering on which we feed; not only is He God's delight, but He is that of which we can partake with Him. He is the subject-matter of communion. "As I live by the Father, so he that eateth me shall live by me." The communion is between all saints, the worshipper, the priest, and God. Not only is it our privilege to see the sacrifice offered to God opening a way of access to Him (as in the burnt-offering and others), but we find the Lord takes delight in communion with us about it.

The first thing to be observed in the peace-offering is the complete and absolute acceptance of the sacrifice, so that the Lord speaks of it as His food, that in which His holiness could find intrinsic satisfaction. The inwards were presented for a sweet savour (as Jesus); they are tried and examined by fire, and found to be food for God Himself. The fat represents the spontaneous actings of the heart. The richness of an animal is its fat; we judge of its healthy vigorous state by this.

228 It is written, "Our God is a consuming fire." This expression is sometimes wrongly interpreted, as if spoken of God out of Christ. We know nothing of God out of Christ. We may be out of Christ ourselves, and then indeed, as a consuming fire, the very presence of God would be destructive to us. But as known to us also who are in Christ, He is a God intolerant of all evil, of all that which is inconsistent with Himself.

As the slain one, Jesus is that on which we must feed. He says, "The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world; whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life," John 6. When we come to the knowledge of Jesus, we feed on Him as thus slain, having, as it were, His blood separated from His body. "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." We feed on Jesus as having given His life; not on His life as life, but on Him as having given His life even unto death; not only as the incarnate One (that is, the bread come down from heaven), but as having given His flesh to be eaten, and His blood to be drunk. And here also is that which not only satisfied the justice of God, but also is esteemed, fed on by Him as His delight, and specially in the work by which He glorified Him in His death.

There, in the work which He did, Jesus was His delight and in this, in the light of His countenance, and as the delight of God, we too have a portion. It is the common food of those assembled as worshippers, to feast on before Jehovah. But if any were unclean who fed on this sacrifice, they should be cut off from the

people (Lev. 7:20). It was only as clean persons they could meet thus with Jehovah. It can be only as those already cleansed and accepted, that we can have this common delight in the Lord Jesus, given as a common object of communion and enjoyment between God and us, and with one another. In this act, our worship is not simply as coming to inquire about our acceptance; but, having already access, it is to rejoice with God about the sacrifice, knowing the fruits of it. It was a thanksgiving-offering; praise was in it. All proceeds upon the conviction of full satisfaction having been previously made.

229 Often our worship has not sufficiently this character in it. We have intercourse frequently with God about our anxieties, our failures, our evil condition; but if this is all, we come very far short of the privileges that belong to us. Our religion should not be altogether a religion of regrets; but rather we are called to joy and rejoice, through the Spirit, in the perfectness of all that Christ has done; not merely joy because wrath has been intercepted, but there is that in Jesus which draws out constant love and delight from the Father, and we too are introduced into the place of communion with the Father about Him. Now, if we are associated in this worship, we are there as being clean, for no unclean person is able to partake of it.

In the peace-offering, the priest who sprinkled the blood had his part. He stood there as Christ, who is the One who sprinkled the blood and joys in the communion flowing from His sacrifice.

We learn, in these sacrifices, God in the respective characters of the Trinity, as well as in the abstract character of His holiness. If we look at God as the Father, we have the joy of His countenance as sons; but as God, we need a priest by whose presence we are encouraged to approach Him. As believing in Jesus, we stand so completely accepted in the immediate love of the Father, that Jesus says, "I say not that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me." At the same time we know that, as still in this body of sin and death, we have continual need of the exercise of the priesthood of Jesus, and this, indeed, in communion, we can never leave out, even the joy of knowing the priest as having sprinkled the blood. In our joy we cannot exclude the priest: communion is a common thing with us. God delights, we delight, and Jesus delights with us. Marvellous thought! The priest returns from the sprinkling of blood, Himself to be a partaker of our secret joy in the holy place (Num. 18 : 8-11). It is most important to see that we have no real delight of which the source and spring is not JESUS. So satisfied is God, and so cleansed are we, that we can come thus to enjoy the communion resulting from what Jesus has done, and as the priest, He feasts with us now in the holy place. Where two or three are gathered together, there is He in the midst of them, as the One who has sprinkled the blood, to feast even now, while we are waiting for that day, when in person He shall be present with us to eat and drink in the Father's kingdom. He said once, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you, before I suffer." He was not content without this last memorial of His love to them and association with Him. While the expectation was present with Him of the time when He would drink it new in the kingdom of God, He desired them to have continual remembrance of Him, "This do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."

230 The offering was to be eaten the same day, or at farthest on the second day; it was not allowed to be kept longer. This marks the communion to be necessarily spiritual, and only to be had in communion with the sacrifice of Christ, not in nature. If it be the willing state of the soul itself through grace, this may be kept up a longer time; where it is thanksgiving for actual benefits, there is not the same power in it. It is only in the Spirit that we can have this communion with God. If the flesh comes in, all is spoiled; it must be burned with fire. The worshipper must eat his portion in connection with the burnt-offering, and the priests' portion. If eaten apart from these, having, as it were, from that separation lost the virtue communicated from the others, it becomes an abomination; and the soul that eats must bear his iniquity. Thus we shall

continually find that joy in the Lord is apt to degenerate into that which is merely natural. For instance, if Christians in gladness of heart come to seek the Lord in communion, the Spirit is present; they forget all grief; the communion between their souls and God is within the veil, and there is no sorrow there; but if they are not very watchful, their joy degenerates. It overlasts what is spiritual, and becomes joy in the flesh. The real test and power of this is its connection with the sacrifice offered.

In believers, there will be differences in the power of this communion. Those who rest most simply in the sacrifice and blood of Jesus will have the most power of sustaining it. "Ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life," Jude 20, 21. As we walk in the Spirit, we shall have power to continue in this holy fellowship and joy; but the earthly vessels are not competent to bear all the glory. There is always a tendency for the flesh to slip in. We may get full of our joy, and proud through it, or at least lose a sense of our dependence, and this at once opens a door to all the folly of our evil nature. After Paul had been in the third heavens, so that he knew not whether he was in or out of the body, we find he was in danger of being puffed up. What was the remedy? Any thing that mended the flesh? Not at all, but a messenger from Satan to buffet him. There is no mending the flesh; but we know this is not the place or condition in which we shall always be, for He "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself," Phil. 3 : 21.

#### 231 CHAPTER 4.

The offerings in this chapter differ in character from the preceding, being sacrifices made for actual transgressions. Before, we had the offering of Christ as a sweet savour, and the communion of the believer upon it; but here there is altogether a new revelation. The three former were delivered under one revelation, which is marked by the words, "Jehovah called unto Moses, and spake unto him" (chap. 1:1), which are repeated at the beginning of this chapter. Accordingly we find, that instead of the Lord Jesus being manifested to us as a sacrifice for a sweet savour unto God, we have Him here typified as bearing our sins in His own body - the sin-offering; Jehovah bruising Him on our account.

The SIN-OFFERINGS were consequent upon positive transgression; the accumulation of guilt was laid upon the head of the victim. We shall find under this class all the forms of transgression provided for. There are four different characters of sin-offerings. In chapter 5 to verse 13, sins are mentioned analogous in nature, but different in circumstance, and a trespass-offering commanded for them. In verse 14 of chapter 5 begins another revelation from God concerning the trespass-offering for anything done against Jehovah; and chapter 6 mentions trespass against a neighbour.

In the chapter before us (the fourth) we have instances of defilements of conscience concerning things which ought not to be done, being against the commandments of Jehovah. The natural conscience shrinks from murder and open sins but there are other things which, although of a different character, nevertheless, if committed, bring on us defilement before Jehovah. There are things of positive requirement about which a soul may be ignorant, but neglect of which brings defilement; and, again, there are things which we know to be wrong, by means of the spiritual perception God has given us. We learn from these details, that trespasses against Jehovah, and wrongs done to our neighbour, though not all of the same importance, yet all require a sin-offering; all recall Christ to us, as taking upon Him our sins, He is our sin and trespass-offering.

232 The first two cases are, "If the priest that is anointed do sin," and "the whole congregation sin": in either case the directions for the offering are the same. Some of the blood must be sprinkled "seven times before the Lord, before the veil of the sanctuary"; - "and the priest shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before Jehovah in the tabernacle of the congregation." This was done, that there might be no interruption to the general communion, for the whole congregation being identified with the high priest, his worship in the sanctuary at the altar of incense would be interrupted by their collective defilement: and again, the priest being the representative of the whole congregation before Jehovah, their exclusion was involved in his. Their sin is charged upon the bullock that is slain, which (the fat being burnt upon the altar) is burnt without the camp, and this is the ground of their renewed communion with God. Here is shewn to us, not the perfectness of Jesus as presented to God, but Jesus bearing the defilement of our sin; yet we see the fat is still burned on the altar (v. 8), and that has in it the character of the burnt-offering, shewing that, though made sin for us, yet His offering to God therein was intrinsically perfect; but the whole bullock is burnt without the camp, pointing out to us Jesus as cast out and bruised, on account of His having taken upon Him our sin, as in 2 Corinthians 5:21: "he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin." Having presented Himself in perfectness to God, He is then made sin for us, and it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him. Marvellous word! Jesus, the Holy One, who knew no sin., is cast out, and numbered with the transgressors.

If it was merely an individual that sinned, the order of the service could still be carried on, because the communion of the congregation was not thereby destroyed. In this instance, the blood was then only sprinkled on the altar of burnt-offering, because that was the place where God met an individual; for he must be reconciled, that he might have his place in the congregation, to hold communion with God, It is only because Jesus bore our sins individually, that we have communion. But He did it once for all.

233 Of this sacrifice we find the priest is commanded to take a portion (chap, 6:25, 26); the fat and blood only being presented to the Lord on the altar of burnt-offering. We shall see in this the character of Jesus' work for us, and find the blessedness of it.

In many things we all offend, not only having sin in our nature, but doing things which conscience tells us ought not to be done; and in this state we could have no access to God for communion. These offences render the offender unfit for communion, and while in this state he could not approach God. Observe in this chapter, it is not merely sin, but sins that are mentioned. And here, for a moment, I would speak of the importance of not misquoting (as is often done) the passage, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world"; it is not said sins of the world, for if that were true, God could have nothing to charge it with.

It is indeed true, that the world as a system shall be restored to God: that place over which Satan has now gained such power shall be redeemed, as it is said in Colossians 1:20, "By him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven." In the hands of the second Adam, the sacrifice is the ground of the restoration of all that was alienated in the first Adam; so that His atonement not only forms a ground upon which every sinner may be addressed, but through it the world shall be restored to blessings. This result, however, is entirely future, as we know from the present dominion of Satan in this evil world; and, in the mean time, many despise and reject the blessing, for whom judgment is reserved; but to the believer present peace comes, though his be not a portion in the result yet.

In the offerings before us, there is not merely this general atonement, but the bearing of sins, the actual transfer of sins to Jesus, the free gift of many offences unto justification of life. As in Isaiah 53 it is said, "He bare the iniquities of many," as well as "made his soul an offering for sin"; and here we not only see Jesus presented as an offering to God, by virtue of which any sinner may be addressed, but the believer also finds that his sins are laid upon Him. And the church, in anticipating the great result, finds that it is a saved body, and is brought into the knowledge of that which the apostle declared (Col. 1:21), "And you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled," etc. Thus we get full settled peace, for we know that Jesus has borne not merely some of our sins, but we get at this great general truth, that all our sins are laid upon Him and are blotted out. If we believe that by bearing our sins Jesus has justified us, then we must know that all our sins are gone from the presence of God, as He has said, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Jesus has endured the penalty. "He hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling"; and faith is able to look at Jesus as the bearer of all sin for us, and the sin having been charged upon Him, the church is raised out of all the evil it had been in, being by one offering perfected for ever. What He did was, that He bore the bruising due to us.

234 We can look at the work of Jesus in no other light than as thus complete; and we must, therefore, see all the sins of the church laid upon Him, and consequently all put away, and God righteous and just to forgive, because Jesus had already borne them. There can be no enfeebling of this - it would be doing it away altogether. If I say they are not completely taken away, then which of them remains, and where are the sins from which I am not justified? When is each sin to be separately atoned for? If it is not simply as a body He presents the church in perfectness of acceptance, what is forgiveness? If we are brought, by our sense of the need of this blood-shedding, to see the value of it, then we not only come to the mercy-seat, but find all our sins have been put away, and that He suffered the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. It is, of course, only by the Spirit we are brought to know and value this, even that Jesus was our substitute, that "He bore our sins in his own body on the tree"; and that having done so, God is righteous to forgive. Nothing can be more plain than that, if Jesus did indeed bear our sins, then every believer is justified from all things.

235 We may look at it in all its breadth and compass; Jesus confessed our sins, bore them, and was bruised on their account. If He has opened your heart to believe in Him as bearing sins at all, then all your sins are put away; you must either deny that He was bearing sins at all, or you are justified. Here is the certainty of peace; and we stand justified from all things, and Jesus looks at us in this character, not at any particular time, but in order that He may present us to God. There is no question of past or future transgression, but He bore our sins. Hold fast this. There is, indeed, the frequent consciousness of faults. While faith says our sins are put away, still in looking at ourselves we see evil; and now we find how graciously the Lord provides for this defilement. The priest that offered the sin-offering was to eat it (6:26). As the worshipper and the priest ate the peace-offering together, representing Jesus as being identified with the joy of communion; so the priest takes part of the sin-offering, shewing that Jesus is identified with the sin which hinders communion. Only priests ate it in the holy place specially, the priest who offered it was to eat his portion: Jesus is this priest; that on which the sin was confessed the priest ate, and identified himself thus with the defilement.\*

Now, in passing through the world we get disqualified by sin for communion; even though we know it not, we cannot take our blindness as the measure of God's holy requirements. The blindness of our consciences is not the blindness of God's eye, as man is apt to think; but the riches of divine mercy has provided a way, in which, although God sees it a, yet He sees us free from it, because He sees the sin all

upon Jesus. He bowed His head under the weight, saying, " My sins are too heavy for me to bear." But in His resurrection we see they were actually and effectually put away, having been home in His own body; so that we are justified from all things, perfected for ever. He rose again, God having accepted the work by which we are justified and thus bearing testimony to it. There are things which our consciences tell us ought not to be done; but of the sins of ignorance it is said, "Though he wist it not, he is guilty, he shall bear his iniquity." There is no folly like that of taking the blindness of our hearts as God's estimate of sin; but let evil and defilement be what they may, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin, and grace restores communion.

{\*Only Jesus did this once for all His sympathy operates in washing our feet with water. See 1 John 2:1, 2, and John 13.}

236 In Numbers 19 we have a special case of a sin-offering. There is this difference between Leviticus and Numbers. In Leviticus, we have the sacrifices in their great distinguishing characters; in Numbers, we have the particular application in the trials of a walk of faith, meeting the case of individuals falling into evil, or contracting defilement. In Numbers 19 there was a red heifer taken, and burnt as a sin-offering, according to the description in the chapter now before us; the ashes were kept "for a water of separation, a purification for sin." Any man unclean by touching death was sprinkled with it. This shews the power of the sin-offering, as brought by the Spirit to the conscience; it is not a fresh sacrifice, there is no shedding of blood, but merely the ashes sprinkled.

There are but three instances of blood being sprinkled on individuals, which are these: Aaron and his sons on the day of their consecration (Lev. 8:23, 30); the leper on the day of his cleansing (Lev. 14:7); and the people on the giving of the covenant from Mount Sinai (Exod. 24:8). There needed, in fact, but one sprinkling, for, looked at in its whole character, "the worshippers being once purged, have no more conscience of sins"; but for the daily defilements there was the water of separation, the application of a past thing with present power to the conscience, as the case required. The sacrifice of Jesus is an act done long since. But when the believer, once cleansed by faith in His blood, contracts defilement in walking in this world, for this there is no fresh offering, but the sacrifice is brought to his remembrance by the Spirit. It is the blood that cleanses us from sin, and gives us our portion as sons by adoption; but, as regards the conscience in communion, it is the Spirit of God bringing to recollection what Jesus has done, as the ashes of the red heifer, so as to give peace and restore communion. These are the truths brought out in the sin-offering.

Since the whole church is concerned, Jesus is presented unprovable and unblameable in God's sight, and being sanctified by the offering of His body once for all, and perfected for ever by the same, the worshipper has no more conscience of sins. Thus the believer is introduced at once to the knowledge that all the church's sins were transferred to Jesus, and that in His resurrection the saints are completely justified. Let the sin be of whatever character it may, though you wist it not, yet whatever cannot accord with the holiness of God's sanctuary shall not come into it. His holiness never varies from itself, and the more we know of the value of the blood-shedding of Jesus, the more we shall see the impossibility of communion with God, in sin; but if our conscience condemn us, what have we to do? We have the blessed perception through the Holy Ghost of that of which the ashes are the memorial, even the remembrance of that which has been done by Christ, bringing us again into holy communion.

237 The perception that Jesus has taken the defilement maintains the standard of holiness in spite of our sin. Nothing but Jesus charging the sin upon Himself could do this; and if we do not see the holiness

maintained we shall be making excuses for our sin, and thinking we can still have communion with God in it; and our estimate and standard of sin must of necessity be lowered. If my conscience cannot know the sin absolutely put away, I must give up communion, or seek it on some other and lower ground; but seeing Jesus a burnt-offering and a sin-offering, we see Him made sin, and ourselves made the righteousness of God in Him. And we see that He loved us, and gave Himself for us, not for anything in us, but because of the prevalence of His love over all. What blessed thoughts must we have in this knowledge of the perfectness of His love! and what must be the blindness of those who count God to be such an one as themselves, seeing that He has given Jesus!

## CHAPTER 6.

There is much that is important in the close of the account of these offerings. In the previous chapters the characters of the sacrifices were brought out. First, the perfectness of the offering of Jesus unto God: and, secondly, as outcast, treated as defiled, by reason of the sin that was laid upon Him. This trespass-offering partakes of the latter character. The Spirit of God is a holy detector and judge of all that is inconsistent with Himself: nothing of sin can pass unnoticed. The Spirit does not judge according to the natural conscience, but takes a standard according to the holiness of Jesus in the presence of God, so that our minds do not always discern that which He sees requisite to be judged; but whether we discern or not, the Spirit takes account of the evil in us, and if it were not for the sin-offering and trespass-offering, we should be in a worse case than ever; for there is no atonement for sin made by the Spirit - this is no part of His work. The Spirit manifests all righteousness, revealing to us what Jesus taught, but we never read of the Spirit bearing our sins. This is a point of the utmost importance for our rest. The Spirit is the spirit of testimony and holiness. In acceptance and in atonement Jesus alone has any part. Acceptance came in upon what Jesus had done in the flesh - by His offering of His body once for all. "In the body of his flesh through death," etc. The testimony of the Spirit is to unmingled holiness, bearing witness to our sins, shewing us that in us good does not dwell, and also that peace and rest come by what Christ has wrought. The effect of this testimony of holiness would be to destroy peace, if the Spirit did not still reveal the efficacy of the blood-shedding; but while it is His office to exalt the perception of the holiness God requires, He still witnesses to us that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin."

238 When we look at the variety of sin (for in spite of our ignorance we do perceive and know sin as still cleaving to us), never could we have peace but through the testimony of the blood of Christ.

Supposing we have erred in the character of worshippers, ignorantly committing any of those things which are forbidden; here is sin, though we wist it not - the holiness of God is not limited by our conscience.

There are many things which would be sins upon the conscience hindering communion, were it not for the blood of Jesus.

The power and effect of the revelation of Jesus Christ is to bring us to God, to holiness. It is in vain, therefore, to reckon upon grace, if we do not see the place into which it brings us, even into the place of worship, The effect of grace is to bring us upon ground on which nothing inconsistent with worship will be tolerated.

In the chapter before us we have the different characters of sin, which without blood could not be passed by. He will by no means clear the guilty. All that is inconsistent with Jesus within the veil is sin for us, and separates us from Him in communion. In the sixth chapter we see that God's eye notices sin against a neighbour, as well as against Himself, for the command is, "Receive ye One another, as Christ hath also

received us to the glory of God." With unhindered liberty we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus., even where all the holiness of God is displayed. The Spirit reveals many things in us inconsistent with this holy place, but we know that Jesus has offered both a sin and a trespass-offering. "He was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him"; therefore the revelation of holiness reveals nothing to hinder our entrance into the holiest. Only we are increasingly purified from an the light of that place shews us.

239 If the holiness of God has been revealed, and you have swerved from the requirements of it, may the Spirit of God so reveal to you the offering made once for all, that you may be humbled as to yourself and then go on, resting upon the truth of the completeness of the sacrifice, assuredly knowing "that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin!"

## CHAPTER 8.

We have considered in detail the work appointed for Aaron and his sons, as priests to Jehovah; we have now an account of the manner of setting them apart for that office. They are first washed with water, this signifying the sanctification by the word. In this the high priest is identified with his sons; even as Jesus says, "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Thy word is truth"; set apart, as man in glory, as the model of what we ought to be in holiness; and again, "By the words of thy lips have I kept me from the paths of the destroyer." And when speaking of the church the language is, He "gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word."

This being done, the high priest alone is clothed in his robes and anointed; he needed not blood to admit him into the service of God. He was the representative of One whom God could receive and own as "his servant, his elect, in whom his soul delighted." Thus after His baptism we find the Spirit descends as a dove upon Jesus, and a voice comes from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." He needed no offering for Himself, but stood as the anointed of God without shedding of blood. Afterwards Aaron identifies himself with his sons, when sacrifices are brought to be offered for them: thus we see Jesus in one person, as it were, with us, entering the holy place by His own blood, that we might be made His fellows, that we might be qualified to worship with Him. This enabled Him to say, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God." And afterwards we find that blessed association with the saints which made Him say, "In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." He is not ashamed to call them brethren.

240 We are thus marvelously introduced into the presence of God and the Father to worship in the holiest. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." But the high priesthood of Jesus is essentially connected with our introduction into the holiest of all and our worship there. The name indeed of Father carries us farther as partakers of the Holy Ghost and life in Christ; we have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

The burnt-offering and sin-offering are offered, and also the ram of consecration; all the various aspects of the work of Christ, in the value of which we come to God, are presented to us in connection with the priest's consecration to God.

In the case of the leper's cleansing (Lev. 14) there is an analogy in the application of the blood of the sacrifice: only here it is consecration, there cleansing from sin; and further in the leper's case the application was individual, but here the whole church is presented. Aaron and his sons fin their hands with

the offerings, and they are waved for a wave-offering before the Lord.

They are qualified by the sacrifice, and priestly service becomes their privilege. The ear and right hand are sprinkled with blood, the great toe also, that nothing should enter into the mind, no act be performed, nothing should be found in their walk through the world, which should not be according to the precious blood of Jesus.

The church stands thus under the efficacy of the whole work of Christ. All that hindered from entering into the place of worship and service is done away; competency to exercise ministry depends upon our walking in the Spirit; but provision for this has been accomplished once for all, and we cannot escape from this responsibility - a responsibility measured and guarded by the holiness of Christ's blood-shedding - entire death to sin and the world.

241 Let us remember, that whatever is unfit for us in entering the holy place, unfit for us as ministering priests, as worshippers in the sanctuary, must be put away. It is the privileged position of the church to be introduced to all the blessings of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus. If we are made anything, we are made priests unto God; as a body we are looked at according to the estimate God has of the sacrifice of His dear Son.

There is no renewal of the consecration; the priests were only to wash their hands and feet, that they might carry no defilement into the sanctuary from day to day; so we have need only to have our feet washed . Let us be careful thus continually to cleanse ourselves from any practical unfitness that may defile us in our intercourse daily with an evil world. Jesus has begun the new song of praise, and puts the same into our mouths, as sprinkled with His blood, anointed with His Spirit, and feeding continually upon Him in the presence Of the living God. Consider how far you have realized this as your standing, and be careful to cast away all that defiles you as a priest set apart for such a service. This is something far beyond walking half in the world and half with God, questioning whether even you do believe or not. Be assured, God would have you brought out of this miserable uncertainty. He would have you identified with the sanctuary, entering into all the fulness of joy that results from intimacy of fellowship and service with Jesus. Kings and priests unto God, not only blood but anointing oil was upon Aaron and his sons, and his sons' garments. All within and without is consecrated. He "loveth us and hath washed us in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God and his Father: to him be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

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